Hope, Yet No Hope—No Hope, Yet Hope

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 8, 1866, BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"You are wearied in the length of your way; yet you did not say, There is no Hope." Isaiah 57:10.

"And theysaid, THEREISNO HOPE: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will everyone do the imagination of his evil heart." Jeremiah 18:12.

WHO can understand the subtlety of the human heart? Well said the Prophet, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." The physician of the body had need be skillful to track disease to its secret origin and to follow it through all its mysterious pathways in the mazes of the human body. But he who has to deal with souls has a task far harder, inasmuch as sin is more subtle than the virus of the most incurable disease, and the way in which it intertwines itself with every power of humanity is even more marvelous than the strange influences of plague and pest upon the human body.

Those whose business and office it is to deal with sick souls set it as their great object to be instruments in the hands of God of bringing diseased souls to trust in the great salvation which God has provided in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And simple as such a work may seem to be, every truly experienced minister is brought to confess that it needs a Divine art and Omnipotent power to bring a soul to rest simply upon Christ. All the subtlety of the human heart exerts itself to the utmost to prevent that heart from trusting in the Savior—and while evil is always cunning, it shows itself to be supremely so in its efforts to guard the Cross against the approaches of sinners. By the Cross, as the Savior said, the thoughts of many hearts are revealed. The Cross develops the subtlety of man when we see his struggles and contortions to avoid resting upon its glorious provisions of Divine Grace.

There are two phases in spiritual life which well illustrate the deceitfulness of the heart. The first is that described in my first text, in which the man, though wearied in his many attempts, is not and cannot be convinced of the hopelessness of self-salvation but still clings to the delusion that he shall be able, somehow—he knows not how—to deliver himself from ruin. When you shall have hunted the man out of this, you will then meet with a new difficulty which is described in the second text. Finding there is no hope in himself, the man draws the unwarrantable conclusion that there is no hope for him in God. And, as once you had to battle with his self-confidence, now you have to wrestle with his despair.

It is self-righteousness in both cases. In the one case it is the soul content with self-righteousness. In the second place it is man sullenly preferring to perish rather than receive the righteousness of Christ. I ask the children of God to pray that I may be enabled to simply but earnestly deal with men's souls this morning! It is their conversion that I am aiming at.

I shall neither strive to please your ears nor your tastes, nor do I court an opportunity for oratorical display. All I want is to lead the sinner, by God's Grace, out of himself and then afterwards to lead him up from his self-despair. And oh, may God the Holy Spirit bring some souls by my means this morning to the foot of the Cross, and may they look up and know themselves to be saved through the finished sacrifice of our Great High Priest!

I. Considering the first text, we have to speak of A HOPE WHICH IS NO HOPE. "You are wearied in the length of your way; yet you did not say, There is no hope. You have found the life of your hand; therefore you were not grieved." This well pictures the pursuit of men after satisfaction in earthly things. They will hunt the frequents of wealth. They will travel the pathways of fame. They will dig into the mines of knowledge. They will exhaust themselves in the deceitful delights of sin, and finding them all to be vanity and emptiness, they will become sorely perplexed and disappointed.

But they will still continue their fruitless search. Wearied with the length of their way, they still stagger forward under the influence of spiritual madness! And though there is no result to be reached except that of everlasting disappointment, yet they press forward with as much ardor as if a full assurance of success sustained their spirits. Worldlings seem far more resolved to die than some Christians are to live. They are more desperate in seeking their own destruction than Believers are in enjoying spiritual life. Indeed, they are content because they have found the life of their hand. Living from hand to mouth is enough for them. That they are still alive—that they possess present comforts and present enjoyments—this contents the many.

As for the future, they say, "Let it take care of itself." As for eternity, they leave others to care for its realities—the life of their hand is enough for them. Their motto is, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." They have no foresight for their eternal state and the present hour absorbs them. Carnal minds with all their might pursue earth's vanities, and when they are wearied in their pursuit they still say not, "There is no hope," but change the direction, and continue the idle chase! They turn to another and another of earth's broken cisterns, hoping to find water where not a drop was ever discovered before.

That, however, is not the subject of this morning. The text applies very eminently to those who are seeking salvation by ceremonies. This is a very numerous and increasing class. It is getting to be the current and fashionable belief that we are to be saved by going to holy places, receiving priestly baptism, Episcopal confirmation, eating consecrated bread, drinking hallowed wine, and repeating devout expressions. We are going back to the beggarly elements of Rome about as fast as we can and in a very short time we shall see the whole of this country covered by an Anglican Popery which will be far more hard to deal with than the more manifest Popery of Rome.

It is surprising that in an age which was supposed to be one of thought and common sense, men should so soon be dazzled with the gaudy toys of Romanism! I marvel that the

childish processions, the babyism, the effeminate millinery, the infantile nurseryisms of Rome should have charms for reasonable men and women! Some of the churches during the past week would have made little children scream with delight—they would have felt that they were in the prettiest nurseries and toyshops which they had ever seen! O it is an age of folly in which men think to worship God with displays fit only for children's sports!

There may be some hearer here who is pursuing salvation by outward ceremonies. Your path is certainly a very tedious one and it will end in disappointment. If you addict yourself to the fullest ceremony. If you are obedient to it in all its jots and tittles—keeping its fast days and its feast days, its vigils, matins and vespers, bowing down before its priesthood, its altars, and its millinery, giving up your reason and binding yourself in the fetters of superstition—after you have done all this you will find an emptiness and a vexation of spirit as the only result!

And it is probable that when you have once committed yourself to that course you will go on, wearied with the road, but too bewitched to be able to leave it! Pressing forward, you will be unwilling to confess that you have been mistaken. You will be conscious that you feel but little consolation but continue to pursue your downward course as if glory surely shone before you.

It is only Divine Grace that can enable us to follow Luther's example, who, after going up and down Pilate's staircase on his knees, muttering so many Ave Marias and Pater Nosters, called to mind that old text, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." He sprung up from his knees and forsook once and forever all dependence upon outward formalities and quit the cloistered cell and all its austerities to live the life of a Believer, knowing that by the works of the Law there shall no flesh living be justified.

Yet, dear Friends, albeit that I know only Divine Grace can turn you from the delusive path of vain ceremonies, I would like to suggest a doubt or two to you which may be helpful one of these days to make you choose a wiser course. Does it not seem to you to be inconsistent with the Character of the God of Nature that He should have instituted a plan of salvation so singularly complicated and theatrical as that which is nowadays taught us by priests? Nature is simple! Her grandeur lies in her simplicity. If you walk in the fields of our own happy land, or climb the lofty ranges of the Alps, you are delighted with the beautiful simplicity of nature in which there is an utter absence of everything gaudy, showy, and theatrical.

Everything has a practical design, and even the colors of the flowers, which are not without intent and design, enable the plant to drink in certain rays of light which shall best satisfy its need. There is nothing in nature for mere display! But you step inside a place of worship dedicated to salvation by ceremonies, and I am persuaded that your taste will be outraged, if that taste has been formed upon the model of nature. Frequently, on the Continent, I turned with loathing from gaudily decorated churches daubed with paint, smothered

with gilt, and bedizened with pictures, dolls, and all sorts of baby prettiness. I turned aside from them in uttering, "If your god accepts such rubbish as this he is no god to me! The God of yon rolling clouds and crashing thunder, yon foaming billows and towering rocks is the God whom I adore. Too sublime, too noble, too great-minded to take delight in your genuflections and stage-play devotions."

When I beheld processions with banners, and crosses, and smoking censers, and saw men who claimed to be sent of God, and yet dress themselves like Tom fools, I did not care for their god, but reckoned that he was some heathenish idol whom I counted it my glory as a man to scoff at and to despise! Do not fall into the notion that the God of nature is different from the God of Grace. He who wrote the book of Nature wrote the book of Revelation, and writes the book of experience within the human heart. Do not, therefore, choose a way of salvation utterly at variance with the Divine Character.

Has it never struck you that ceremonial salvation would be a very wicked way of salvation? What is there, for instance, about drops of baptismal water which could make men better? What is there about confirmation that should assure you of the forgiveness of your sins? What is there about receiving a piece of bread and drinking a drop of wine that should confer Divine Grace? Might you not remain as bad at heart and as wicked after all as ever you were? And is it not a violation of the eternal principles of morality that a man should be endowed with Grace while his soul still clings to sin?

Now, if there is no effect in water to make you hate sin, and no result from the priest's hands to make you love God, and no result from sacraments to make you holy and heavenly-minded—can you trust in them? Surely there must be some sort of congruity between the means and the result! Surely it is immoral in the highest degree to tell a man that by outward things, which cannot change the life, he shall have his sins forgiven! We shall have the iniquity of the Middle Ages back again if we have the faith of the Middle Ages proclaimed—and from all that may God in His Grace deliver us! The votaries of superstition have furnished us with a very solemn argument, for many of them, when they have lain dying, have turned their eyes to other places and have anxiously begged for full assurance of eternal life.

Superstition, strange to say, has been truthful enough to reply, "I have no rest to offer you." For what does Rome offer when you have done all? Purgatory and its pains! It tells you that when you have done all, you may have to lie for hundreds of years in a place full of misery till you have been purged from sin! How very different from the Gospel which the Word of God reveals to you—that whoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is saved not only from the guilt of sin but from the love of sin—is enabled to be holy, is made a new creature, and without any purgatorial cleansing shall ascend to his Father and his God to dwell with Him forever!

So simple, so God-like, so Divine! How is it that so many cast it aside, and take up with these sillinesses which are the inventions of man? This whole Book through salvation is never said to be by anything done by priests—but salvation is everywhere spoken of as being by Christ through faith! There is not a place that gives a vestige of confidence to anybody who hopes to be saved by the performances of rituals—but everywhere salvation is presented to those humble, contrite souls who know and trust the Savior's blood.

Perhaps these words of mine may not apply to many of you, and therefore we will turn to another phase of the same thing. A great mass of people, even though they reject priest-craft, make themselves priests, and rely upon their good works. A poor and wretched man dreamed that he was counting out gold. There it stood upon the table before him in great bags, and as he untied string after string, he found himself wealthy beyond Croesus' treasures. He was lying upon a bed of straw in the midst of filth and squalor—a mass of rags and wretchedness—but he dreamed of riches!

A charitable friend who had brought him help stood at the sleeper's side and said, "I have brought you help, for I know your urgent need." Now the man was in deep sleep and the voice mingled with his dream as though it were part of it. He replied, therefore, with scornful indignation, "Get you gone! I need no miserable charity from you. I am possessor of heaps of gold. Can you not see them? I will open a bag and pour out a heap that shall glitter before your eyes." Thus foolishly he talked on, babbling of a treasure which existed only in his dreams till he who came to help him accepted his repulse and departed mournfully. When the man awakened he had no comfort from his dream, but found that he had been duped by it into rejecting his only friend.

Such is the position of every person who is hoping to be saved by his good works. You have no good works except in your dreams. Those things, which you supposed to be excellent are really defiled with sin and spoiled with impurity. Jesus stands by you this morning and cries, "Soul, I have come from Heaven to redeem you. If you had any good works there had been no need for Me to come to save you, but, inasmuch as you are naked, and poor, and miserable, I came to earth and this face was bedewed with sweat of blood, and these hands were pierced, and this side was opened to work out your salvation. Take it! I freely present it to you."

Will you, in your sleep this morning, make that sad reply, "Jesus, we are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing. We have neither cursed Your Father's name, nor broken your Sabbath, nor done anything amiss"? If so, dear Friends, you are resting upon a delusion and will find it so when it is too late! The way of salvation by works, if it were possible, would be a very wearisome way. How many good works would carry a man to Heaven would be a question very difficult to answer. It would be such a way that though a man should work his fingers to the bone, yet he would never be able to clamber up the

precipice—for Sinai is too steep and high for mortal feet to force a passage to the skies up its terrible battlements.

The way of salvation by works is totally contrary to that revealed in the Bible. If there is anything plain there, this is plain, "By the works of the Law there shall no flesh living be justified, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin." The way of salvation by works is a proud, rebellious way, by which man hopes to avoid humiliating himself before his God. How should the Lord bestow His favor upon the man who refuses to trust in His own dear Son? Shall the Lord yield to save men, and yet let them remain proud and boastful? Shall He save a man who refuses to owe that salvation to Divine mercy? You weary yourself, my Hearer, in your resolutions, and doings, and works, in the greatness of your way, and yet you will not confess that, "There is no hope." May the Lord force that conviction upon you till you shall turn aside from all self-confidence and rest in Jesus Christ alone!

Many persons are looking for salvation by another form of self-deception, namely, the way of repentance and reformation. It is thought by some that if they pray a certain number of prayers and repent up to a certain amount, they will then be saved as the result of their prayers and repenting. This, again, is another way of winning salvation which is not spoken of in Scripture. This is a way by which neither Law or Gospel receive honor. To repent is a Christian's duty, but to hope for salvation by virtue of that, alone, is a delusion of the most fearful kind! The reason for salvation lies not in my repenting, but in Christ's suffering—not in my renunciation of sin, but in Christ's having borne my sin in His own body on the tree. Oh, that by God's Grace I may have done with relying upon anything that comes from myself!

The idea of trying to repent in order to save yourself is so ridiculous that it has sometimes reminded me of the old story of the Dutchman, who, having no family, but having a great many cousins, left his estate in this way—all the cousins were to meet in the Town Hall on a certain day, and whoever could cry for him first, and could honestly say he wept out of sorrow for his death should have the estate. Now there was a very great difficulty here, because of the remarkable mingling of feeling. Could they get themselves into a state of mind so as to lament his death? Well, the largeness of the fortune and the desirableness of the estate at once dried up the tears!

I forget how the story ends, but it sufficiently shows the impossibility of lamenting in order to gain an object. The hopeful joy and the sorrow, if both possible in themselves, would effectually neutralize each other. The tears of true repentance must be as much the gift of God as Heaven itself, and if we were to have an offer to be saved on account of our repenting, repenting would be an impossibility to us. Repentance is a part of salvation, and when Christ saves us He saves us by making us repent! But repentance does not save—it is the work of God, and the work of God alone. Now why do you weary yourself in this way? For surely in it "There is no hope."

My drift in all this rambling talk is just this—whatever it is, my dear Hearer, that you are looking to as a ground of confidence—if it is anything in yourself— pray you give up all hope, for though you have not seen it to be true, it is nevertheless assuredly so that there is no hope whatever by it. Where you have to do with the work it will be marred and spoiled and will end in confusion. Salvation is of the Lord, and your deliverance from your present state of sin and guilt must come from the right hand of the Most High! It cannot in any degree, or in any measure, come from yourself. You have destroyed yourself, that is, in your works—your help must be found in Another from the first to the last.

I shall be accused, I know, of dispiriting you. I shall desire to plead guilty to the accusation! And if it shall even be urged again that I drive you to despair, I shall again plead guilty and glory in the result! I wish to preach everyone who would save himself into utter despair! If any man is hoping to save himself, I pray God that He may smite that hope dead on the spot—that it may be renounced forever. Sinner, oh that you would consent to yield up all confidence in yourself, for then there would be hope for you!

Most men must have a secret hope somewhere of a false kind, for, look at the way in which they are employing themselves. Most men are not seeking to escape from the wrath to come—they are busy in worldly things while Hell is near them. They are like idiots catching flies on board a ship which is in the very act of going down. Surely those men must have some fictitious hope somewhere or they would not act like this! We see many persons busy about their persons, decorating themselves when their soul is in ruin. They are like a man painting his front door when his house is in flames! Surely they must harbor some baseless hope which makes them thus insensible!

We see men who do not quail and tremble, though they profess to believe the Bible which tells them that God is angry with them every day. Surely their quietness of heart must arise from some secret hope lurking in their spirits! The rope of mercy is cast to the sinner and he will not lay hold of it! Surely he cannot be such a fool as to love to die—he must have some hope somewhere that he can swim by his own exertions and it is this hopefulness of the man in himself that is his ruin and his destruction. Until you are totally separate from all consciousness of hope in yourself, there is no hope that the Gospel will ever be any power to you!

But when you shall throw up your hands like a drowning man, feeling, "It is all over with me! I am lost, lost, unless a stronger than I shall interpose." Oh Sinner, then there is hope for you! If we can once get you to say, "One thing I know, I cannot save myself. One thing I feel, I must have a stronger arm than mine to rescue me from ruin." When you have come to this, O Soul, we will begin to rejoice over you and may God grant that our rejoicing may not be in vain!

II. We shall now turn to the second text. "And they said, THERE IS NO HOPE: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will everyone do the imagination of his evil heart."

Here we have NO HOPE—AND YET HOPE. When the sinner has at last been driven by stress of weather from the road of his own confidence, then he flies to the dreary harbor of despair. He is now convinced that there is no hope in himself, and like a simpleton he goes to the other extreme, and concludes, "Then I cannot be saved at all."

He acts as if there were nobody in the world but himself, and begins to measure God's power and God's Grace by his own merit and power. Some before me, convinced of their own powerlessness, are ready to lie down in a fit of despair and die. "The preacher has been telling us there is no hope, then we will give it up." My dear Friend, I know what will be the result if you go away with that impression—you will go off to your sins—for despair is the mother of all sorts of evil. When a man says, "There is no hope of Heaven for me," then he throws the reins upon the neck of his lusts and goes on from bad to worse.

You will thoroughly misunderstand me if you go away with that impression. There is no hope for you in yourself, but there is hope for you in Him whom God has provided to be the Savior of such as you! Hopelessness in self is what we want to bring you to, but hopelessness in itself, and especially in connection with God, would be a sin from which we would urge you to escape. If you are sitting down in despair, I want to speak to you, first, of the God of Hope. Dear Friend, there is that in God—Father, Son, and Spirit—which may remove your fears so that you need never utter a single doubting word again!

You are saying, "I am full of sin." That is true—you are much more full of sin than you think you are. "But I have been a great sinner." That is likely—and you are a greater sinner than you will ever know yourself to have been. "But I don't feel my sinnership as I ought to do." That is very likely—and you never will do so. No man on earth ever did feel sin in all its guiltiness, for God alone knows the blackness of sin. "But I am altogether such a one that there is nothing in me to recommend me. I could almost wish I had been a great sinner, that I might feel a great repentance. I have nothing to recommend me."

Now think of the loving kindness of God the Father. Do you remember how He revealed Himself in that parable of the prodigal son? That prodigal son had been ungrateful, wicked—very wicked. He had spent his life in all sorts of vice and had become filthy in person and loathsome in character. His associates were of the lowest race of men, and then brutes themselves. Yet the goodness which he had not in himself his father had. He was all sin, but his father was all mercy. He was all iniquity, but his father was all loving kindness. Now can you not see, if the prodigal were here, we might say to him, "There is no hope for you in yourself. Those rags cannot recommend you. The swine trough cannot be used as an argument."

But then that would not be a ground for his stopping where he is, for "there is hope for you in your father. He is so good, so tender. He rejoices to receive his returning children." And, Sinner, there is hope in God for you. His name is God That Is Good. He delights in mercy—it is His soul's highest joy to clasp His Ephraim to His bosom. This very morning

He has sent me to say to you, "Come now, and let us reason together, said the Lord. Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

But you meet this invitation with another desponding suggestion. You say, "Why should I come before the Most High God? I have sinned, and what shall I bring as a recompense? Rivers of oil and ten thousands of the fat of fed beasts, if I could bring them, would not be acceptable to Him. If I had a mint of merits. If I had godly impressions. If I had high moral excellence I would come with that to God, and hope to obtain a hearing."

But hearken, Sinner, do you not know the name of the second Person in the Trinity? It is Jesus Christ, the Son. Now, if you need merit, has He not enough of it? For what cause do you think He lived on earth three-and-thirty years and kept God's Law? Did He keep that for Himself? What need for God to be a man and to become subject to Law at all? He must have kept that Law for someone, then—but not for righteous men, for such have kept the law themselves! He must have kept it for the unrighteous.

Now, can you not take that which Christ has worked out, and take it to yourself when He freely bids you take it? You talk of sin but have you never heard that my Lord Jesus died? Why Man, you have heard this hundreds of times! But I pray you open your eyes and see it! Do you see that Cross, the center one of the three? Thieves hang upon the other two, but God Himself hangs upon the one in the middle. God, in the form of Mary's Son, hangs bleeding out His life in acute sufferings exquisite, unutterable! For whom does He die? Not for Himself! What cause that God should be a man and die? He suffers! He suffers for sin! For whose sin, then? Not for His own for He had none. For the sins of good people? What need of that? He dies for the sins of those who have committed sins—for the sins of transgressors such as you and I are!

Oh Soul, do you not hear the voice that said, "Look unto Me and live"? What? Jesus, am I not to do anything by way of merit? Am I not to be anything by way of preparation? Am I to stand and simply look at You and feel my sins forgiven? Blessed be Your name! What a simple plan of salvation! Now I feel my heart begin to melt. Now I hate the sins that nailed You there. Now do I give myself to You, to serve You all my life. This is good evidence of salvation when a man can thus speak: "I hate sin and I desire to serve Christ." You can see that he is saved from the power of sin—the power of the Cross has made him a new man!

Oh Sinner, if you have no merit, you need not wish for any! Take Christ in your hands for He is made of God unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption! And all this for every soul of Adam born who trusts in Him alone! But I hear you complaining again, "Oh, but I have not the power to repent. You have told me this before and I cannot believe it—I cannot soften my heart— I am so powerless I cannot do anything! You have been teaching me that." I know I have, but there is another person in the Trinity, and what

is His name? It is the Holy Spirit. And do you not know that the Holy Spirit helps our infirmity?

Though we know not what to pray for as we ought, yet He teaches us to pray. It is true you are darkness, but then He is your light! It is true you are naturally dead, but the Holy Spirit gives us life! And the light of God is the Holy Spirit as He shows Himself to you. It is clear that you can do nothing without that Spirit—that should make you despair of self! But you can do everything with that Spirit! Now, lift those eyes of yours with which He has already taught you to weep! Lift them up to the Throne and say, "My Father, if I may dare to call You by that name, help me to trust Your Son! My God, I see in Yourself a Father's love, in Your Son a Savior's power, and in Your Spirit the Quickener's life. Oh give me to feel Yourself within me, or, O God, if I may not feel it I will still believe it, for You cannot lie, and whether I have a comfortable evidence or not, I do this morning—utterly hopeless of anything in myself—I do this morning cast myself on You. "Lord, I believe! Help You my unbelief."

Why, Sinner, I do not know what it is that you may want, but I know one thing—it is provided for you in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and resting upon the great Savior whom God has provided, there is hope for you, my dear fellow creature! There is the brightness of a ray of hope this very morning, only may God turn it from a possible into an actual hope and give you a good hope of eternal life through believing in Jesus Christ!

Thus I have tried to turn you away from self to the Lord—but it may be I have some very hard cases to deal with— and so, two or three suggestions by way of smiting at the despair which some of you feel. A great Divine has said—and I think there is some truth in it—that a very great number of souls are destroyed through the fear that they cannot be saved. I think it is very likely. If some of you really thought that Christ could save you, if you felt a hope that you might yet be numbered with His people, you would say, "I will forsake my sins, I will leave my present evil way, and I will fly unto the strong for strength."

Now though I have laid judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and sought to put the axe to the tree of all creature confidence, yet there is hope in Jesus Christ! There is hope in Jesus Christ, my dear Hearer, even for you! And I will give you these two or three reasons. In the first place, would it not be wise even if there were only a "perhaps," to go to Christ and trust Him on the strength of that? The king of Nineveh had no Gospel message, He had simply the Law preached by Jonah, and that very shortly and sternly. Jonah's message was, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But the king of Nineveh said, "Who can tell?" And having nothing to rest upon—not a single word of promise—he humbled himself before God, he and his people, on the strength of a, "Who can tell?"

Ah, my dear Hearers, take care lest the men of Nineveh rise up in judgment against you! You have got much more than a, "Who can tell?" Oh Sinner, you are saying, "I cannot be saved." But I ask you, Who can tell? "But I do not feel that there is hope." Who can tell? "But

I am such a sinner." Who can tell? "Oh, but I am such a dull, heavy spirit! I cannot feel—there cannot be mercy for me." But who can tell? Surely if but on the presumption of "Who can tell?" the men of Nineveh went and found mercy, you will be inexcusable if you do not act upon the same, having much more than that to be your comfort! Go, Sinner, to the Cross, for who can tell?

But, in the next place, you have had many clear and positive examples. In reading Scripture through you find that many have been to Christ and that there never was one cast out yet. If you had seen some repulsed, you might conclude that you must be among them, but not one has been rejected by the Savior. Why should you be? We need not turn to books—there are living people here saved by Divine Grace. I myself am one. I had no more preparation for Christ than you have. I had not the shadow of anything to trust to any more than you have. When I heard the Gospel precept, "Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth," I did look, and I am saved!

Oh my Soul, I am the witness for my Master that He is true! In a moment, no sooner had I looked than I had joy and peace, and I can promise you the same! Those wounds of Christ still stream with mercy! That head crowned with thorns still beams with the splendor of Grace! Do but look into His pierced side and you shall see a fount most deep and full—still flowing with blood and water to cleanse you, even you, from sin! Do not say you cannot come to Christ for He is not here—you cannot come upon your feet, but then your thoughts are the feet of your soul! Come to Him in thought. Come to Him in confidence. Come to Him in trust, and you cannot trust Christ and yet be cast away. You have living examples.

Moreover you have comfortable promises in the Word of God. I was thinking much yesterday of this promise—I wonder whether God has sent it to my heart for any of you—"Your hearts shall live that seek Him." I was wondering whether I should preach from it, but anyhow it kept following me about—"Your hearts shall live that seek Him." If you seek Him your heart shall live! Leap on the back of that promise and let it bear you, as the Samaritan's beast bore the dying man to an inn where you may rest—I mean to Christ—where you may have confidence.

Here is another. "Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Now you do call upon His name. There are many others. They have been quoted in your ears till you know them by heart. "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And you know that precious one, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." You see I had some black things to say at first—I had to tell you that the disease was incurable by natural means—but then the supernatural Physician can remove it! I had to tell you that the ship was sinking and could not be saved, but I have now to point you to the lifeboat which can never be wrecked. I had to warn you that your own arm is palsied, but I have to assure you that the Lord's arm is not so shortened that it cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that it cannot hear.

I had to remind you that you were hopeless bankrupts and could not pay a farthing in the pound, but I have to assure you that He has paid all Believers' debts. I had to tell you that you were all so dirty in His sight that, in yourselves considered, you never could be accepted. But I have now to say, on the other hand, that every Believer is so clean and fair after being washed in Jesus' blood that he is without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Away, you broken cisterns! Oh, for the hammer of God to dash you into shivers! But come, come, come you thirsty ones to the ever-flowing, overflowing fountain! Here is nothing stinted! Here is no shortness of supply, no illiberality of gift—come as you are!

The fountain flows freely and richly for you, who, having nothing in yourselves, are willing to have everything in Christ Jesus! Do not be saying, "There is no hope," for there IS hope! There is more—there is security—there is certainty to every soul that trusts in Jesus!

To conclude, do you not know, poor Sinner, you who believe in Jesus this morning—do you not know the news? Then I will tell you a secret. Do you not know that if you now prostrate yourself at the foot of the Cross, you are God's chosen one? Your name is engraved on the hand of Jesus, on the heart of God! Before the daystar knew its place or planets ran their round—before the primeval darkness was pierced by the sun's first ray you were dear to the heart of Deity! You are His elect, His beloved one! And do you not know that the mountains may depart and the hills be removed but the Covenant of His love shall never depart from you? Neither shall His Grace be removed, said the Lord, who this morning has manifested His mercy towards you!

Though you are but just now converted, there is laid up for you in Heaven a crown of life that fades not away. Jesus pleads for you this very day! He this day prepares one of the many mansions for your eternal dwelling place! Be of good courage! Angels are singing, Heaven is rejoicing over YOU! The Church on earth is glad concerning you! And one day, when the great Shepherd shall appear, you also shall appear with Him in glory—and all this for you, poor helplessly ruined sinner—helpless in yourself, but saved in Christ Jesus! May God add a blessing to this simple testimony this morning and His shall be the praise.